

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 359

By Beck

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of JT Gray.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of JT Gray, the owner and co-founder of the Station Inn, which has served as a mecca for bluegrass and roots music fans in Nashville since the 1970s; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gray opened the Station Inn in 1974 and moved the establishment to its present location in Nashville's Gulch district in 1978; and

WHEREAS, after working as a tour bus driver, Mr. Gray bought the business outright from his co-founders in 1981 and devoted himself to the Station Inn for the rest of his life; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gray is credited with fostering one of the "world's greatest musical communities" at the Station Inn; he utilized the club to ensure that bluegrass musicians "had a voice and a home" and to create "a family bound not by blood but by the love of creation"; and

WHEREAS, under Mr. Gray's leadership, the Station Inn had long been the one and only venue in Nashville where residents and visitors could count on hearing roots music every night, with its bluegrass emphasis sometimes tempered by traditional country or Americana music; and

WHEREAS, the club has since become an icon of the old Nashville in the face of the city's growth and gentrification, featuring a mixture of locally and nationally known musicians seven nights a week and Mr. Gray greeting and conversing with patrons; and

WHEREAS, in later years, country music icons such as Chris Stapleton and Sturgill Simpson have appeared at the Station Inn, and John Prine recorded a full-album show for the Americana Music Festival at the club; and

WHEREAS, country star Dierks Bentley, who loves bluegrass and has previously appeared at the Station Inn, paid tribute to the club as part of a "This Place Matters" campaign on social media; and

WHEREAS, the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum is currently featuring an exhibit about the Station Inn, "The Station Inn: Bluegrass Beacon," which pays tribute to Mr. Gray's legacy of "kindness, inclusion, and fundamental, unwavering decency"; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gray was deservedly inducted into the Bluegrass Hall of Fame last year, and he and the Station Inn were featured on the recent telecast of the Grammy Awards, on which he presented the Grammy for Best Country album from the venue; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gray loved bluegrass, and "his views were true to the heart of the music he loved"; "his integrity, his humor, and his staunch belief in bluegrass music and musicians" will be greatly missed; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of JT Gray, reflecting fondly upon his legacy of supporting and promoting bluegrass and roots music and the musicians he treasured as family members and his integrity and compassion as a human being, and extend our condolences and sympathy to his family and many friends.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.